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A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
H A R M O N Y
OF
Satisfaction and Free Grace
IN THE
SALVATION OF SINNERS.

B E I N G

A Reply to the Rev. Mr. ISAAC's Gospel
Doctrine of Free Grace maintained.

By **SAMUEL ROWLES.**

For God, who commanded the Light to shine out of
Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light
of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of
Jesus Christ.
PAUL.

C R E W K E R N E :

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In January last, Mr. Pinsent of Moreton-hampstead in Devonshire sent me a little anonymous piece entitled, Thoughts on Satisfaction; and Free Grace asserted—requesting me to answer it. So far I complied with his proposal as to make some general observations and remarks upon it. In February Mr. Pinsent had my letter printed (but not published) under this title, The Harmony of Satisfaction and Free Grace in the Salvation of Sinners. And in June Mr. Isaac published his Gospel Doctrine of Free Grace maintained: with some strictures on my letter to Mr. Pinsent. To which I call these pages a Reply; and which would have been in the press six weeks ago had it not been detained at the request of a friend: the end of whose request however is disappointed. This is the history of the present debate.

Chard, 16th August, 1788.



ERRATA

Page 36, line 12, read, *that the lawgivers* P. 80,
l. 8, read, *been*

A

DEFENCE &c.

AT the end of the gospel doctrine of free grace maintained, I observe there are three propositions laid down by Mr. Isaac; and to which I am expected to accede without "mutilation," if I hear any more from him. It seems but reasonable therefore that I should begin my Reply with shewing the reader how far I do, or do not, accept the proposal.

" Prop. I. *That a really divine revelation can teach no doctrine which contradicts the clear and certain conclusions of reason; because that would be to destroy the use of the only faculty, by which either the evidence or the nature of such revelation must, if at all, be examined, and make the Fountain of Truth the author of confusion (a).*"

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It

(a) Gof. doc. p. 37.

It is certain that God is the fountain of truth, and that he cannot possibly be the author of confusion; and it is also as certain that reason in a creature, even suppose the creature to be innocent, is not a standard by which to measure the infinite Jehovah. Whatever "contradicts the clear and certain conclusions of reason," I allow cannot be a revelation from God; but then it should be allowed likewise that it is possible for God to reveal such truths or doctrines which are superior to reason. If this be not granted we renounce all reason, and make ourselves the measure of Deity. But if any doctrine be revealed *confessedly* above reason, then reason cannot attempt to prove such doctrine to be contradictory without being inconsistent with itself. No proposition can be proved by itself; there must be a second term, or idea, produced that is adequate to the business; or the supposed conclusion must be fallacious. Let the following instances be duly considered. When revelation asserts the unity of God, reason approves the proposition, and can shew the impossibility of a plurality of Gods; because there can be but one necessary, infinite nature or essence—*One first Cause.* Here reason has a medium
by

by which to argue without danger of erring; and the inference may be drawn with infallible safety. But revelation teaches moreover that this infinite nature comprises the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Nor can reason confute this doctrine,—1) because it has no adequate rule by which to try the merits of the question, seeing nothing is equal to God but himself—2) because the terms are not confounded. The Father is not the Son, nor the Holy Spirit. Nor are they said to be three and one in the same sense. To disbelieve a proposition is one thing, to disprove it is another. Again, I observe from revelation, that the union of the divine and human natures constitute the person of our glorious Mediator. Nor can reason prove it to be contradictory,—1) because the natures, though united, are not confounded—2) because there is no rule by which to shew its absurdity. It is not contradictory to the divine perfections, it cannot be shewn to be impossible to the divine will; and therefore to right reason it cannot be absurd. I could enlarge; but let this suffice. I am such a cordial friend to reason, that if these doctrines can be proved to be contradictory to its “clear

and certain conclusions," I will very cheerfully give them up; and the book which contains them I will reject as a divine revelation. I wish to allow reason all its "use" and importance in judging of the "evidence" of a revelation from God, and in forming a judgment of the "nature" of the truths revealed; but I must and do utterly deny its capacity to prove any of them to be contradictory. If Mr. I. differs in his opinion, he will be so kind as to shew me my mistake.

Prop. II. *That the only rational method of ascertaining the sense of any consistent writer, either sacred or profane, is to consider what is, and must be, the meaning of that part of his writing, which can be understood in one sense only, and conveys that sense so clearly, that it cannot be mistaken by any one who knows the meaning of the words there used; and not to interpret what cannot, without torture, be made to bear any other than the obvious sense of the words, by what is confessedly obscure, and may therefore admit of a latitude of interpretation. If this be not granted to be a just maxim of criticism, we must be always in danger of making a writer inconsistent with himself; and consequently, if it be one of the sacred writers, a ve-*
ry

ry uncertain guide in matters of the highest importance (b)."

I am not sure that I understand this proposition—Does Mr. I. mean that every consistent writer uses the same words always to convey the same ideas? That we are to understand such a writer's words always in one sense only? That if we understand the meaning of the words themselves we cannot mistake his design? If so, I must reject the proposition—The word Redemption, for instance, in some places designs only temporal deliverance; in others it signifies our deliverance from final condemnation by the death of Christ. I allow of no obscurity in the words Priest and Sacrifice; yet they admit of a "latitude of interpretation." Sometimes they are applied to Aaron and his service—at others to Christ and his work. What Mr. I. means by using obscure passages to elucidate obvious ones, I confess I cannot conjecture; and must therefore wait to be told. "Maxims of criticism" had need be understood before they can be regarded; and therefore I wish Mr. I. to be more explicit.

Prop.

(b) Ut supra, p. 38.

Prop. III. *That whatever is revealed of God to men, must be, when revealed, within the compass of reason, or capable of being comprehended by it, in the present state; and that what cannot be comprehended by reason, is not revealed; and therefore cannot be the object of faith; for to believe that of which we have no conception, is believing nothing at all (c)."*

This proposition, I apprehend, cannot be received without sacrificing truth and modesty altogether; for this idea of reason excludes revelation and faith for ever. Faith in the doctrines of revelation is, in other words, receiving those doctrines for divine truths on the testimony of God—but, if my reason can comprehend them, that comprehension at once supersedes both my faith and God's testimony. No person is said to believe the existence or truth of that which he comprehends. Revealed religion therefore or comprehensive reason must be denied—let Mr. I. chuse for himself. I appeal to the scriptures. The love of Christ is revealed; and yet the apostle saith it *passeth knowledge (d)*. The riches of Christ are revealed; but they are expressly called *unsearchable*

(c) Ut supra. p. 39.

(d) Eph. iii. 19.

searchable riches (e). And the resurrection also is a doctrine of revelation; but it is a *mystery* (f), or a truth that reason cannot comprehend, any more than at first devise. Mr. I. therefore must either be able to comprehend these things, or renounce them; seeing his comprehensive reason, and not divine testimony, is laid down as the rule of faith. I am fully persuaded that a "dispute which wants principles can not support the interests of truth (g);" and I am equally persuaded that the principle of this proposition can have no truth to support. Was it ever heard, or is it possible in the nature of things, that the *less* should comprehend the *greater*? Is it not demonstrable that the *capacity* which comprehends must exceed the *subject* comprehended? Can Mr. I. measure the waters in the hollow of his hand, mete out heaven with the span, comprehend the dust of the earth in a measure, and weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Yes, but he must do more than this to realize this proposition;

(e) Ver. 8. ἀνεξετάστον. See Rom. xi. 33. And if the LXX translation of Job v. 9—ix. 10. be consulted, the same word will be found which Paul uses, and designed to convey the same meaning, namely, that which cannot be comprehended.

(f) 1 Cor. xv. 51. (g) Gof. doc. p. 40.

proposition; he must comprehend HIM who does all these things! But, I suppose that Mr. I. like some other folks, would have us believe that, 'where mystery begins religion ends'—not apprehending that this position, if traced home, terminates in absolute atheism; for there is nothing more incomprehensible in the scripture doctrine of the Trinity, in the incarnation of the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit's dwelling in the saints, or in the resurrection of the dead; than in the existence and perfections of Deity. Natural religion has its incomprehensible or mysterious doctrines as well as revealed; and, for that reason, if Mr. I. would be consistent with himself, he ought fairly to give up both, and have no religion at all, or else to shew us what religious doctrine can be comprehended. And not only so, but I would also observe that, if Mr. I. should measure his faith by his comprehensive faculty, he will not believe the existence of any single article in the universe of being—to him there can be no being whatever; no, not even the rev. J. *Isaac* of Moretonhampstead in Devonshire. Were I to say that this proposition shews the consummate vanity of human nature, perhaps it might give offence;

offence; let it therefore suffice to observe that, whatever doctrine be supported by such principles, cannot possibly be *The glorious gospel of Christ*.

Having just taken a view of the out-works, the gates being open, let us enter and survey the garrison. On looking round about I observe the favorite sentiment of *socinianism* to be embraced by one who would be called, *A christian Minister*. But socinianism and christianity are as opposite as the two poles; and as unlikely to be united—because the former denies the essential dignity and distinguishing characteristic of the latter. I have not said that Mr. I. is a socinian; but I may safely assert that the appellation *christian* may be as justly given to a turk or a jew as any other person, who denies the atonement and satisfaction of Christ. Mr. I. thinks that he “highly esteems the obedience and death of Christ (*h*);” but, if I mistake not, it will appear in our progress, that the scripture sense of both is evidently opposed, if not expressly denied. With a view therefore to

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consider

(*h*) Ut supra, p. 29.

consider the subject properly, I will state it as plainly and fully as I can.

If the forgiveness of sin be of free grace, how can it be obtained by the satisfaction of Christ ?

This is the sum of the debate—and, in order to discuss the question like those who wish to know and embrace the truth, it becomes requisite to enquire concerning—The law—Sin—The pardon of sin—The atonement of Christ, and, The grace of God. If there be no law there can be no sin, and consequently no forgiveness of it; and, of course, there will be no need of the atonement of Christ, nor any discovery of divine grace in him to us. An inattention to either of these articles is a virtual disregard to all; because they are absolutely inseparable. Here we place

I. *The Law.* Every law supposes a lawgiver who has a right to enact laws and authority to enforce them. Our lawgiver is the great immortal God of heaven and earth; whose right and authority are underrived and therefore indisputable. His law is the rule of moral obedience to his creature man; and, as a covenant, was accompanied

panied with the promise of life and the threatening of death. This law was written on the heart of the first man, and is revealed in the word of God. Under this idea the Creator wears the additional characters of Lord, or Governor and Judge; and man becomes related to him as a subject, and an accountable creature. Apart from this thought either man must be reduced to the class of brutes, not capable of such a law; or else he must be raised superior to his Maker, by being not amenable at his bar—both which extremes are absurd, and therefore inadmissible. Only allow the fact, that God gave such a law to the first man and in him to all his posterity; that this law is spiritual, holy, just and good; and it will follow that its obligations are indispensibly and everlastingly binding. To suppose it was not spiritual and holy, extending to all the thoughts and intents of the heart as well as the external deportment of life; would be a censure on the holiness of the divine *nature*. To apprehend it was not most compleatly just and good, would be charging injustice on the divine *government*. And to teach that it may be superseded, or in the least weaken-

ed, is to teach in fact, if not in design, that the *relation* is dissolved in which it was founded. Its doctrine is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, and strength; and thy neighbor as thyself. This requirement is holy and righteous; for God is, both in himself and to his creatures, the supreme beauty and the supreme good. The obligations of the creature, perfectly to regard this law, arise from the infinite loveliness and goodness of its author. For this reason the obligations of the creature are infinitely binding, and must be as lasting as they are strong; because, while Jehovah remains to be what he is in himself and to his creatures, and while human beings continue to exist in their mutual relations to each other, *supreme* love to him and *equal* love to them will be their invariable duty, according to this law. Nor is there any necessity for its being abrogated, or succeeded by another; because it has no imperfection—It is so completely perfect and worthy of God, that no other can exceed or equal it. On this account whatever may be suggested about a new or milder law, is not only derogatory to revealed truth, but is unworthy of God and encouraging to sin.

In

In the form of a covenant indeed, it has never been given to men since the violation of it by our great Progenitor—nor is there any reason why it should; because, for the elect of God its federal claims are answered, and for the finally impenitent they abide in force. This idea also renders another law, however named, not only superfluous, but impossible. It was evidently given to Adam and his descendants in the form of a covenant, as appears by the promise and penalty annexed. This I intimated might be proved—1) by the death of infants—2) from our being children of wrath by nature, and—3) by Christ being made under the law to redeem his people from the penalty of it. The first and third of these thoughts Mr. I. passes over in silence—for what reasons the reader must judge for himself. And the treatment of the second does no honor to Mr. I. as a fair disputant. The apostle did not use the term (*i*) which is rendered *nature*, to express the state of man as he was “formed of God (*k*),” nor did I quote him as having this meaning; and therefore such an idea is very ungenerously suggested. Happy is he

(*i*) Φυσις. (*k*) Ut supra. p. 22.

he who condemneth not himself in censuring others. Nor does the word here used, any where in the new testament, signify acquired habit; nor will the authority of Dr. Doddridge assist Mr. I. in his design; for, in his version and note on Eph. ii. 3. the Dr. says, We are "*heirs* of the curse denounced on sin—we are *born* in sin, and in consequence of that *innate* corruption are early plunged in actual transgressions." This is contrary to acquired habit. But the Dr. also says, "It is more reasonable for the word to refer to *original apostacy* and corruption, and that it signifies a *natural* disposition, and not merely an acquired habit." If Mr. I. did not wish to impeach his own conduct, and contradict his professed opinion, I cannot conjecture why the Dr. was cited to appear on this business! Besides, let me ask Mr. I.—Has acquired habit no original principle whence it springs, and by which it is strengthened and confirmed? Who was the first man that acquired a vicious habit, and how came he to do so? Do not acquired habits of vice *now*, originate in the same source they did *then*? I expect an explicit reply, because the subject requires it. Once more,

I would observe that it was with reference to this law as a covenant that Paul said, God sent forth his son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law (1). Here the apostle speaks to the fact and the design of it. The fact is, Christ was made, not born, under the law. He was not born under it because he was not the son of Adam—his human nature was not brought forth according to the common course of generation, and therefore he was not obliged to regard it like Adam and his posterity; and the ineffable union of his human with his divine nature rendered him, personally considered, superior to its federal obligations. The *design* of his coming was the redemption of those who were under it. This he could not effect without perfect subjection to it—nor could this subjection be properly expressed but by complete obedience to its precepts and by bearing its penalty incurred by sin. This law, however worthy of God, had never been duly honored; for this reason, the Son of God was made under it, by a divine constitution, that it might be glorified in the salvation of his

(1) Gal. iv. 4, 5.

his people. Though God's elect were the objects of eternal love and designed for final glory; yet, with the rest of Adam's progeny, they were involved in the guilt and pollution of his first transgression. The covenant of works, made with Adam and his seed, was holy and honorable; on this account its requisitions could not be dispensed with. The covenant of grace, made with Christ and the church of the first born in him, was a display of the wisdom of God; and, for this reason, could not fail of its completion. In the face of Jesus Christ therefore we see the glory of God manifested in the constitution of his person, and in his subjection to the law, that both covenants might be duly honored in the final felicity of the vessels of mercy. This is the centre where all the lines of holiness and love, of justice and grace, of mercy and truth, conducted by wisdom, meet and shine for ever.

Mr. I says indeed, " That Adam's being a federal head, in a moral or religious view, is a subject too stale to deserve attention (m)". It may be so to those who do not believe the word

(m) Ut supra. p. 23.

word of truth—to those who deny the salvation of Christ—to those who are strangers to the grace of God in their hearts—or, to those who feel themselves unable to refute it. Every man discovers his wisdom in not attempting things beyond his might. 'Tis also added, that “full replies have been made to it”—but by whom we are left to guess. If Mr. I. should need information, I would observe, that *Edwards* on original Sin, is a perfect answer to all that has been written against Adam's federal headship from the beginning of the world to this hour; and, as far as I can find, has passed entirely unnoticed by the opposers of this scripture doctrine. There is not a fact in the whole empire of God supported by much stronger evidence than *original sin*. It is confirmed by the undivided experience of well nigh six thousand years. Its being “stale” therefore, that is, old, or long standing, is a reason, not why Mr. I. should reject it, but why he ought to bow to its weight of evidence. May the Holy Spirit of truth lead him to do so; or he will never see the beauty of the gospel of God. True; the apostle says, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done

in *his* body, according to that *he* hath done; whether it be good or bad. And the same apostle declares, by the same authority, that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and that *in him we all have sinned*. Perfectly consistent therefore is original sin with our final personal account; seeing both passages are of equal importance in point of authority and truth. If Mr. I. believes in his conscience that the *sound* and *sense* of scripture may be reconciled; it is pity but he paid some attention to it. When I read my bible I see that Christ came not to destroy, or dissolve, the obligation and claims of the law, but to fulfil them. And Paul says, Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law (*n*). Whereas Mr. I. in *his* gospel, makes no provision for its honor at all, but just the reverse. I should be glad to be informed therefore, expressly, whether God, in pardoning sin, has respect to his law, or whether he has not; that I may know how to act. I shall have occasion to advert to the law again in progress, and therefore go on now to consider

II. Sin.

(*n*) Matt. v. 17. Rom. iii. 31.

II. *Sin.* Here Mr. I. seems to divulge the secret of defending his friend against the satisfaction of Christ; for, if "sin is an ideal being (*o*)," then it only requires an ideal satisfaction. According to this doctrine that which is only ideal, a mere creature of the fancy, cannot constitute a real character; and therefore no sinner can be found in all the human race. This is the necessary import of the gospel doctrine of free grace maintained by Mr. I. and, for this reason, the law of God, and God the lawgiver are ideal beings also. As is the one, under the present consideration so are the others. Now, where this language is approved, it is no wonder to find the essential glory of revelation denied, despised; for, where there is no real transgression, the fear of punishment is mere voluntary slavery, and the doctrine of salvation for sinners is only an empty sound. But if indeed sin is an ideal being, why does Mr. I. talk of repentance and forgiveness? Can a non-entity be the object of penitence and pardon? What fallacious ideas! The scriptures inform us that sin is the transgression of the law—that the law, as broken, worketh wrath—and that the wages of sin is death

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(o) Ut supra. p. 33.

—This, we have reason to believe, is true; not in idea but fact; and will remain a fact to eternity—The demerit of this transgression is of infinite magnitude; and the wages of it, that is, death, consists in an infinite loss.

It is of infinite magnitude in its desert, because it is an offence against infinite Majesty, and a violation of infinite obligations. If Mr. I. will speak out, or any one for him, and say, that the evil of sin is *not* to be measured by the infinite glory of God; then I shall know what to do—but, till then, I shall retain my present ideas of it; and make no scruple to assert “that the obligations of a finite creature are as infinite as God is (*p*).” In proof of this thought I offered, what I still consider, an irrefragable argument in my letters to Dr. Priestley, p. 251; and to which the author of Thoughts was referred—That argument I borrowed from the rev. John Ryland jun. (*q*)—and, since these papers were begun, I have found one of a corresponding nature in an author gone to glory; this I offer to Mr. I. The author says

“Natural

(*p*) Ut supra. p. 29. (*q*) See his Sermon entitled, Christ manifested &c. p. 1. note.

“ Natural conscience will tell a man that God is the moral governor of the world—that all government implies a law, either expressed or understood—that the transgression of that law, whether natural or revealed, is sin—that sin implies a desert of punishment—that every sin or fault deserves a greater or less punishment, in proportion as the crime or fault is greater or less—that a crime is more or less heinous according as we are under greater or less obligation to the contrary—that our obligation to love, honor, and obey any being or beings is in proportion to his or their loveliness, honorableness and authority—that God is a being infinitely lovely, because he hath infinite excellence and beauty; infinitely honorable, because he has infinite greatness, majesty, and glory; and his authority over us is infinite, for he is infinitely worthy to be obeyed in himself, and we have an absolute, universal, and infinite dependence upon him—and that sin against God, being a violation of infinite obligations, must be a crime infinitely heinous, and therefore deserving of infinite punishment (r).”

According to this author, the late *Edwards* of New-England, those who deny the infinite desert

(r) An Essay on the nature of true Virtue. p. 180. note,

desert of sin not only fly in the face of revelation, but even oppose the dictates of natural conscience. It would be therefore but a mark of honest enquiry after truth in Mr. I. or any others who deny the infinite satisfaction of Christ, to try their strength with these arguments; and, if they cannot fairly conquer, cheerfully submit.

The evil of sin may be called infinite, because the sinner sustains, in consequence of it, the loss of an infinite good, and to an infinite duration; unless his sin be pardoned through the atoning blood of Christ. By the first act of transgression Adam forfeited, for himself and his posterity, all that communion with God and enjoyment of him which he possessed in the state of innocence; and that for ever. As to the fact, it cannot be made plainer than it is; and the continuance of it cannot be reasonably doubted, if we only reflect, that it is impossible for a man, once dead in law, to recover that life which the law righteously demands. The law of God is righteous in all its requisitions, and the lawgiver is righteous in taking vengeance. His judgment is always according to truth. Despair in the transgressor, and the

the eternity of his punishment, arise only from his incapacity of ever glorifying the law he has violated—Could a person be found, the holiness of whose nature and life corresponded with the requirements of the law of God, and who could bear the penalty which he deserved; he need not despair, nor need his sufferings be eternal; for, the end of the law being answered, and the lawgiver being fully honored, the obedient sufferer is necessarily and legally glorified for ever—but, not otherwise. This opens a way to the infinite satisfaction of Christ; and gives us a reason why his sufferings were temporary, and why he was not in despair. Mr. I. says indeed, "If my assertion be true," concerning the infinite desert of sin, "every virtue and grace, and every act of obedience, having God for its object, must be infinite in value"—and directly enquires by way of seeming triumph, "what then becomes of his unscriptural satisfaction, which he calls infinite(s)?" Had Mr. I. proved his position, his ovation had not been premature—or, had he only attempted it, some praise would have been due—but, all this he leaves to his next performance. Though, at the same time, if proof
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can be produced, I would observe, his reader is under no obligation to him for concealing it. Mere assertion ought not to stand for argument; and therefore I would remark to Mr. I. if I may be forgiven for doing it—1) That no created act, or act of a finite nature, though it may have God for its object, can be infinite in value—The acts of the human nature of Christ were not such; and,—2) That though a sinful act may *lose* an infinite good, yet it follows not that a gracious act may *merit* an infinite good; because the creature, prior to any act, is under every possible obligation to perfect obedience; and therefore his perfect obedience, supposing it to exist, cannot merit at the hands of God. Even the infinite value of the obedience of Christ himself arises not from his human, but from his divine nature—for, had the human nature of Christ been produced under natural obligation to the covenant of works, like mine; and, had it not been taken into peculiar union with the Son of God, according to a divine constitution; all his obedience would have been due for himself, none besides would have been profited by it. And that it was only *personal* obedience, and rendered only for *himself*, is all the idea that
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some persons affix to it ; and so render the
 ible useless, and themselves, ultimately,
 hopeless—for, those who deny and reject the
 satisfaction of Christ, can have no ground on
 which to expect the enjoyment of the favor
 of God but their own obedience to his holy
 law—and this must necessarily fail for ever.

III. *The forgiveness of sin* requires a few
 words. Though sin be called an ideal be-
 ing, yet it is supposed to be in the world ; or
 otherwise it would be impertinent to speak
 of its forgiveness. If we behold it in a true
 and proper light, as mentioned above, we
 shall be obliged to confess, that if the sinner
 be not pardoned he must perish for ever.
 On this important subject it becomes us to
 be attentive to the voice of scripture. All
 sure knowledge of this blessing must be de-
 rived from thence—1. *What* is pardon of sin?
 It is said to be a not-imputing it to the sin-
 ner: Or, in other words, a reversing the
 sentence of a broken law, and remitting the
 penalty due to transgression. Blessed is he
 whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is
 covered. Blessed is the man unto whom
 the Lord imputeth not iniquity (*t*).—2. *Who*
 E forgives

(*t*) Psal, xxxii. 1, 2.

forgives our iniquities? None can forgive sins but God only (*u*). He is the lawgiver, and he alone can pardon sin—3. *When* does he forgive transgression? Either when he discovers the sinner's interest in the blessing, as he did to the paralytic; Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee (*v*). Or, when the merciful act passed the divine will. This act is necessarily eternal and irreversible, as all his volitions are; but the application of it to the conscience is in time. The manifestations of forgiveness may be, and are, repeated; the act in the will of God can be but one. Though the act of will secures the blessing; yet it is by the word, in the hands of the Spirit, that the comfort of it is brought to the guilty bosom. The act of pardon is always signed, by earthly legislators, before the guilty know it; and the security of life depends, not on the knowledge of pardon, but on the act of the royal pleasure. Here it might be observed, that, when an earthly lawgiver forgives a culprit, either the law which claimed his life cannot be just, or its honors are not supported in his pardon. Neither of which can take place in our present subject. His law is righteous and must be

(*u*) Mark, ii. 7.(*v*) Matt. ix. 2.

be glorified, though the sinner be forgiven.

—4. *How large* is the act of divine forgiveness? The word says, I will cleanse them from ALL their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me, and I will pardon ALL their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. Thou wilt cast ALL their sins into the depths of the sea. Who forgiveth ALL thy iniquities. Having forgiven you ALL trespasses. The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL sin (*w*). Nothing less than this would be worthy of God, or safe for the sinner—5. Who are the *subjects* of this favor? Is it not dispensed promiscuously? No. The Lord says, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And these are all appointed in the will, and enrolled in the records of heaven; for he adds elsewhere, I will pardon them whom I reserve (*x*)—6. *How* is the blessing imparted? In the freest and most gracious manner; without regard to any worthiness in the subject of it. This appears both from

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scripture

(*w*) Jer. xxxiii. 8. Micah, vii. 19. Psal. ciii. 3.
Col. ii. 13. 1 John, i. 7. (*x*) Exod. xxxiii. 19.
Jer. l. 20.

scripture testimony and scripture instances. On the first let one text suffice. Jehovah declares, I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions *for my own sake*, and will not remember thy sins (y). And as to the last, the expiring thief, and persecuting Saul, are instances quite in point. Though the one had been an abandoned sinner, and the other a devout zealot, yet both were freely forgiven and graciously saved. Both were under the righteous sentence of a broken law; both were destitute of such qualities as could recommend them to the divine favor: and therefore they were both pardoned by the free grace of God in Christ Jesus.

IV. Enquiring into the atonement, or satisfaction of Christ, I shall enlarge a little more than on the preceeding article.

That the word *Redemption* (z) signifies providential deliverance, and at times, the resurrection of the body, may be granted—but why should we stop here? What can Mr. I. say for leaving a term of such importance in the unsettled manner he has? But the only question now is, Did I, or did I not;

(y) Isai. xliiii. 25.

(z) Απολυτρωσις.

not, affix an improper idea to it, when I considered it as expressive of that spiritual deliverance which Christ obtained for his people by his death on the cross? If I did, why had not Mr. I. made some effort to convince me of my mistake? If I did not, why was the reader's mind led away from that idea? Mr. I. can tell the reasons of his conduct.

All mankind, without exception, being transgressors of the law of God, are exposed to the penalty of it. The law itself being just, the penalty incurred by sin must be the same; and, of course, had all the race of Adam been left under personal obligation to bear that penalty for ever, the Lord would have been righteous altogether. It could not be unjust to inflict a just punishment. But the Lord Jesus Christ having become the Redeemer of his people, he hath solved their obligation to bear that punishment by bearing it himself; for which reason Paul says, There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus (*a*). And hence he observes that Christ has redeemed them from all iniquity (*b*). The law being satisfied, and
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(*a*) Rom. viii. 1:

(*b*) Tit. ii. 14:

the lawgiver duly honored, they are delivered from wrath through him; and no otherwise.

Every one knows that Moses is called the deliverer of Israel, and that he paid no *price* for them—But, are the nature, design, and effect of the office and work of Moses and Christ the same? And yet, it seems, we must believe that to be the fact, not only without, but even contrary to evidence and truth. If this be the part of a generous disputant, and an honest enquirer after truth, then I am mistaken. The *price* our Redeemer paid for the ransom of his people, is that in consequence of which they are delivered from deserved condemnation, and emancipated from slavery and bondage. The *price*, let it be whatever it may, is the procuring or meritorious cause of redemption. For this reason redemption is attributed to Christ as obtained by his *life*—his *blood*—*himself*—and *the sacrifice of himself* (c). If this be not the true and just idea of such passages of scripture, I should be glad to be informed what is. They must have some meaning; and, if I am wrong, it would be kind in Mr. I. to set me right. This is what I mean

(c) John, x. 15. Acts, xx. 28. Gal. i. 4. Heb. ix. 26.

mean by *satisfaction*; and this satisfaction must have an object; and this object can be no other than the great Lawgiver—because, no *authority* but his can be insulted by transgressing the law; and because, no *majesty* but his can be supported by fulfilling it. This idea is confirmed both by the prophet and apostle. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, he will magnify the law, and make it honorable. Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling favor. And also it is said of Christ that, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot to God (*d*). These words both illustrate and establish the term Satisfaction as fully as any reasonable man would require to see it done. When therefore I speak of the atonement of Christ I mean “something given to God;” and need no further proof than these texts of my using the language of scripture. And, if Paul does not say that “God hath received the atonement (*e*),” he says that Christ offered himself a sacrifice to God; and I will leave Mr. I. to say whether that sacrifice made atonement, and

(*d*) Isai. xlii. 21.

Eph. v. 2.

Heb. ix. 14.

(*e*) Gof. doc. p. 13.

and was received as such, or for what other purpose it was done. And I call this satisfaction *infinite*, because of the dignity of the person who gave it; whom the scriptures describe as Immanuel, that is, God with us, or God manifest in the flesh. With no less satisfaction could the holy law of God be magnified and honored—through no less satisfaction could the righteous Lawgiver hold communion with sinners who had broken his law and offended his justice—and, through the efficacy of no less satisfaction than this, could sinners themselves be so reconciled to God as to delight in his purity and truth, while they trust in his sovereign grace. This was my idea when I said, that one of the effects of redemption was, the reconciliation of God, *as lawgiver*; to the sinful creature; as well as the reconciliation of the sinner to his way of salvation, and his divine perfections and government. This idea Mr. I. has strangely mutilated; I will not say from design. I should suppose that others, as well as myself, perceived that my idea consisted of two parts—one referring to the holy Lawgiver, the other to the sinning creature; while the term Reconciliation, under proper considerations, extended to both. With this view I cited

two passages of scripture, each suited, as I thought, to the respective parts of my intention. For this reason I could not have the least design to prove the first part of my idea by Col. i. 21. which respects the reconciliation of the sinner to God, and for which purpose only I named it—but the text on which rested the evidence for the reconciliation of God, as *Lawgiver*, to the sinful creature, Mr. I. has entirely omitted, together with the term, *Lawgiver*;—for what reasons he did so, he can inform the reader at his leisure.

The text I mentioned was Heb. ii. 17. where Christ, as a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining to God, is said to *make reconciliation for the sins of the people*. As sin is the transgression of the law; and, as the law necessarily supposes a lawgiver; so I conclude that, when Christ is said to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, we are to understand by his so doing, that he magnified the character of the Lawgiver by fulfilling the law; and, that, apart from his obedience and death, the law would not have been fulfilled nor the character of the Lawgiver displayed, in their proper extent and
F glory,

glory, in the salvation of sinners. This doctrine is also confirmed by the prophet when he says the design of Christ's death was, *to make reconciliation for iniquity* (f). I allow that the terms (g) used by the apostle and prophet may be understood as conveying an idea, in some respects, prior to that of reconciliation; namely, as a cause precedes its effect. But every one knows that the cause of reconciliation, on this subject, is an atonement made, or satisfaction given, for the offence committed; the lawgiver may support his character with honor while he gives the sinner his life on the foot of justice. This is my idea; and I should suppose it to be the idea of every man who is at all concerned for the glory of God in pardoning sinners. It is easy to conceive how a man may love his child, *as a child*, and yet be obliged as a lawgiver to withhold the tokens of it from that child, *as a transgressor*, till his legislative authority be duly supported in discovering his paternal smiles. This is not an useless distinction even in human government—much less in the government of the Most High. Notwithstanding this satisfaction being given and received, as above, I have no
idea

(f) Dan. ix, 24.

(g) ἱλασχομαι and כפר.

idea of any change in God's love to his people, or that the death of Christ obtained or secured his mercy to them; for Christ himself, according to the scriptures, as their Head and Redeemer, is the effect and gift of his grace and love—but my meaning is, that holiness and justice could not unite with love and grace, in admitting sinners to his presence, but on the ground of a perfect regard to the divine law. This regard they had not rendered in their own persons, and therefore the Lord Jesus Christ did it for them. And this he was eternally set up and appointed to do, in the fulness of time, according to the love and wisdom of their covenant Father. There is no departing from this idea, in my opinion, but by saying that God *ought not to* regard his law in shewing mercy.

In short, it is the eternal law of God alone, as a covenant of works, whose violation exposes the sinner to a curse; and it is from the curse of this law that Christ has redeemed his people by becoming a curse for them—In consequence of which he is, not “the *means* of their reconciliation” only (*h*), but the true and proper *cause*. Mr. I. is right

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(*h*) Gos. doc. p. 30.

in saying " I do not see that the term Law in Gal. iii. 13. means the jewish ritual (i) ;" for omniscience itself can not see what is not to be seen. It is demonstrable that Paul is not there speaking of the jewish ritual—1) because that body of ceremonial laws never pronounced a curse on the man who failed in keeping them. That curse was incurred by a breach of the *moral* and not the *ritual* law. And the moral law is common to all the world; and not to be confined to the jews—2) because the gentiles were never under the jewish ritual law; and therefore could not be delivered from it—3) because this jewish law is abolished and done away; but the law, of which Paul there speaks, is as eternal as the principle on which it is founded; and therefore cannot be changed by any œconomical dispensation. What authority has Mr. I. for saying that " the law signifies rigorous exactions, and the gospel a dispensation of mercy (k) ?" Under the jewish dispensation, and indeed from the beginning, the chosen of God were saved on the same ground as they are now. Though the administration differed divine mercy was the same. Does he mean that God, under the law,

(i) Idem, p. 20.

(k) Idem, ibid.

law, exacted more duty of his creatures than was just or reasonable; but now is more relaxed and mild? Or, is the law of God "abolished" as the rule of duty? If Mr. I. does not mean this by abolishing the former dispensation, he says nothing to the purpose; because the abolition of the jewish ritual is not denied. But, *who* abolished the law, and *when*, and *why*? To these necessary queries I expect an explicit answer; because, dispensations, whether better or worse, so to speak, are only various manifestations of the same will and wisdom in saving sinners—4) because "hanging on a tree, or dying on the cross (*l*)," did not include all that was intended by the curse of the law—for, if so, the thief, who was crucified with Christ, or any other jew who expired on a tree, would have as really redeemed us from that curse as the death of Christ—than which nothing is more foreign from the word of God, or the glory of his character. But, an author who talks of giving the price of redemption to sin, an ideal being (*m*), may think himself at liberty to say what he chuses. However, let the term Law, as used by the apostle in this place, mean what it may, it cannot

(*l*) Idem, p. 21.

(*m*) Idem, p. 33.

cannot signify any law which Christ had violated ; because he did not die for himself, or for his own sins. Messiah shall be cut off but *not* for himself (*n*). And it must design a law the curse of which believers of the present day were under, or they could not be redeemed from it by the death of Christ. Believers of the present day therefore were not under the curse of the law, or they are not redeemed from it by Christ being made a curse for them. Let Mr. I. say, clearly and fully, how this matter stands ; for nothing less is involved in it than the nature and end of Christ's death, and the everlasting welfare of his church and people.

“ Yes, it may be said, but the death of Christ, as the *price* of redemption, supposes substitution and imputation ”—Truly it does ; and so the scripture teaches—though Mr. I. has modesty enough to assert that “ God *detests* the idea of transferring guilt (*o*). ” If this detestation be a fact it must be learnt from the word of truth. In the 18th. chapter of Ezekiel the prophet is not treating of gospel salvation but providential conduct towards the nation of Israel ; and therefore that
 scripture

(*n*) Dan. ix. 26. (*o*) Gof. doc. p. 20.

scripture is foreign from our subject. This shews that I am not the only person who can quote scripture by *sound* alone (*p*). It is a case in point that carries conviction with it, both in civil and religious debates; if Mr. I. will be so kind as to produce this it shall be duly regarded. But what saith the scripture on this subject? There I read, that the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all—that he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin—that he died for the ungodly and for sinners—that he suffered for our offences and died for our sins—that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree—and many passages of similar import might be adduced. Expressly with reference to this doctrine Christ is called the *Surety* of the better testament—and is said to be wounded for our transgressions, to be bruised for our iniquities—that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed—yea, that it pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief (*q*). How such language can be understood, except the sins of God's people be transferred to Christ, and except he suffered as their substitute, it will be but just in Mr. I. to inform me; for, as yet,
I know

(*p*) Idem, p. 34. (*q*) Heb. vii. 22. Isai. liii. 5, &c,

I know not. As sin forfeits life, so pardon is the giving the continuance of the life thus forfeited; but this blessing must be issued on a condition that secures the honor of the Lawgiver; namely, the death of a substitute. It was the grand design of the jewish ceremonial institutes to teach this doctrine—In case of murder there was an exception; but the exception confirms the rule. In this excepted case the Lawgiver would have no satisfaction made (r), because he was determined that the law should take its course; and this would have been universally and perpetually the mournful fact had not the introduction of a substitute prevented. Mr. I. says, "If Christ was just, he was not considered as a sinner, and consequently not a substitute for sinners, with their sins transferred to him (s)." Is not this very fallacious reasoning? Could any one possibly suppose that because I engaged to pay a debt for another person therefore I contracted that debt? It is contrary to common sense; and, for

(r) The word כֶּפֶר is rendered by the LXX λύτρα, and answers to our Lord's λύτρον ransom, Matt. xx. 28. And Paul's Ἀντὶ λύτρον, 1 Tim. ii. 6. translated ransom, is rather stronger still—Each is designed to convey the idea of substitution, as the price of redemption.

(s) Gof. doc. p. 19.

for a corresponding reason, the idea of Mr. I. is contrary to the scriptures. Transferring guilt, indeed, brings the person, to whom it is transferred, under obligation to suffer for it, and to suffer whatsoever that guilt deserved; but, on the very face of the argument, proves him not to be the guilty person. The debtor and surety are always personally distinct though legally one. If not two persons, their legal relation could not exist; and, if not legally one, the design of their relation in law would be subverted. The Lord Jesus Christ and his people being one in law, in consequence of being one in the covenant of grace, he had their sins imputed to him and died under the charge of their guilt, that he might pay the price of their redemption and pardon, according to the antient design of justice and grace.

Here the whole Deity is known,
Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brightest shone,
The *justice* or the *grace*.

WATTS,

But Mr. I. further suggests that "guilt is not capable of being transferred from one person to another"—By human law I do

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not,

not see how it can ; but God may honorably do that which is not only absurd but impossible with creatures ; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts (*t*). This being the case, he may appoint what way soever his infinite wisdom chuses to magnify his law and manifest his grace in saving his people. This way is discovered in the constitution, in the obedience, and in the cross of Christ. The human nature of Christ was under no charge of guilt for itself—was under no obligation to regard the law as a covenant of works—but being in union with the Son of God, the Redeemer of Israel had a right, or power to lay down his life, and power to take it again. He could not be subject to the curse of the law, or even to simple corporal death, but as the Surety of his people, and with a view to their redemption. Either therefore he suffered and died as a *personal* transgressor, or as a substitute for sinners. There are but these two possible causes of the death of Christ ; for which reason Mr. I. would do well to survey the subject again. It is so far “ inconsistent with the divine character to punish the innocent,”

(*t*) Isai. lv. 9.

innocent (u)," or one in all respects considered as innocent, that I believe the great God would sooner cease to be than do it—Nevertheless Christ was, *personally* considered, absolutely and impeccably innocent; that is, he was not only perfectly free from sin, but it was impossible for him to be otherwise—and yet, none ever did, or can, suffer like him. Let all the world tell me why, or give me a scripture reason for it, if he was not a substitute for sinners.

" Tis guilt alone can justify his death."

And here, before the subject of imputation be dismissed, let one thought more be considered. Mr. I. says, " That works, or " the pious deeds of the faithful, are of some " importance towards their acceptance with " God and final justification, seems indeed " plain by James, ii. 24. Ye see then how " by works a man is justified, and not by " faith only (v)." This is another instance of quoting scripture by *sound* alone; because

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(u) Gof. doc. p. 31. The justice of God forbids his punishing innocence, though his sovereignty would justify his annihilation of innocence; because annihilation is no punishment.

(v) Ut supra. p. 32.

the apostle is not speaking of our justification before God, but of the justification of our religious character, or christian profession before men; for the honorable support of which he not only shews the importance but absolute necessity of good works, or those fruits which true grace produces. In this view, Abraham and Rahab are cases in point, and speak home to the question; but to say that our acceptance with God is obtained, even in part, by our pious deeds, is unscriptural and absurd. Paul observes that God has made his people *accepted in the beloved*—that they are *complete in Christ (w)*; and therefore not in themselves, either in the whole or in part; for what is complete cannot be increased. For this reason, among others, I conclude that the gospel of Mr. I. is what Paul means by *another gospel (x)*, when he was about to defend the gospel of Christ. And though we are said to be justified by faith, yet faith is no more the cause, or even the occasion, of our justification in the sight of God, than our eyes are the cause or occasion of the light—We cannot see the sun without sight or our justification without faith; but both exist apart from, and prior to,

(w) Eph. i. 6. Col. ii. 10. (x) Gal. i. 6, 7.

to, the mediums through which we behold them. With a view to illustrate this subject allow me to enquire—1. *Who* is it justifieth us? It is God that justifieth (y)—2. *What* is God's justifying us? It is that act of his will in which he accounts or esteems us righteous as having a perfect righteousness. Without a perfect righteousness we cannot be justified in his sight; except we impeach his holiness, justice or truth. This act of will must necessarily be eternal, as all his volitions are; and therefore cannot be reversed. It is a *gracious* act; because, though perfect righteousness is the object, yet it is not the cause of it. And it is also an act of *justice*; because it is founded on perfect obedience to his law—3. But *where* shall we find this perfect righteousness? It is in Christ. He is the Lord our righteousness; and, in him, are all the seed of Israel justified (z)—4. And *how* came this righteousness to be ours? It is received by faith; but it is made ours by a gracious and just act of the divine will imputing it to us; according to the plain reasoning of an inspired apostle. David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. By

(y) Rom. viii. 33. (z) Jer. xxiii. 6. Isai. xlv. 25.

By the obedience of one shall many be made, or constituted righteous. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us righteousness. That we might be made the righteousness of God in him (*a*). What the saints of God will be, in his esteem, in final glory, that they are now, and that they ever have been; for, with him, there is no hereafter nor past. There is no succession in the acts of his will, nor in the cause of them. For this reason "the works and pious deeds of the faithful," though to be regarded for necessary uses (*b*), can have *no* importance "towards their acceptance with God, or their final justification"—and, to suppose they have, is derogatory to the gospel, inconsistent with the law, and highly dishonorable to the character, of the great and blessed God. Here the doctrine of imputation stands just as before—The transferring of guilt did not make Christ *personally* a sinner; nor does the transferring of his obedience make his people *personally* righteous. He suffered all that punishment which their sins deserved; and they enjoy all that honor and felicity to which they become entitled by

(*a*) Rom. iv. 6—v. 19. 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.

(*b*) Tit. iii. 14.

by his perfect obedience. He neither obeyed or suffered for himself. Pardon and justification appear to originate in the same source, the sovereign will and pleasure of God; to be obtained by the same cause, the obedience and death of Christ; to be confirmed by the same character, a just and gracious Lawgiver; and to be conferred on the same persons, the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven.

The *necessity* of satisfaction, as the ground of pardon, ought also to be well considered. I did say, that satisfaction is necessary for the encouragement of the praying sinner; nor shall I be convinced that this is "making" that necessary which God hath not made "so (c)," till Mr. I. attempts to prove that the prayer of faith, mentioned by the apostle James (d), supercedes the atonement of Christ. The necessity of satisfaction originates, not in the divine will, but in the divine nature. It appears to me, from Jehovah's conduct in this affair, that to have pardoned sinners without a sacrifice, would have been a reproach to his character; for, without shedding of blood there is no remission (e). The
Ruler

(c) Gof. doc. p. 16. (d) Jam. v. 15. (e) Heb. ix. 22.

Ruler of the world would have been as just to his character, *as Ruler*, in exempting the creature from obedience to his law, as in pardoning the sinner without satisfaction to it; because, if it be right and necessary in God to demand perfect obedience of the creature, it must be equally so to inflict the threatened penalty on the sinner.

By the character of God I mean a manifestation of all his perfections; and from them I argue the necessity of satisfaction in order to the pardon of sin. Whatever perfection the Lord possesses is essential to him; and cannot be separated from him even in idea. Nor can he love one perfection, so to speak, *less* than another; the supposition of such conduct is absurd. Nor can he manifest one perfection *more* than another; this would discover partiality to his own perfections and prove him imperfect; which is impossible. Hence I conclude that the gospel doctrine of free grace in forgiving sinners, not as maintained by Mr. I. but as revealed in the word of truth, is as much a display of his holiness, justice and truth, as of his mercy and compassion. I will therefore name some particulars in evidence.

The

The *holiness* of God is his beauty and blessedness for ever: Infinite holiness and happiness are necessarily and eternally inseparable. As holy, he naturally possesses all possible order and harmony in the volitions of his will, and the proceedings of his power. As holy, he necessarily loves himself and his image wherever possessed by his creatures. As holy, he necessarily disapproves of sin; and therefore cannot possibly connive at it. This disapprobation is essential to him; and consequently eternal. On this account the sinner, considered as such, and because he is a sinner, if not interested in pardoning and purifying grace, can never be happy in the presence of God. His law is a transcript of his holy nature; and therefore he as necessarily loves his law as himself. This law was never loved and obeyed, so as to be perfectly glorified, but by our Lord Jesus Christ. By the mouth of David he says, I delight to do thy will O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart (*f*). This love the Savior expressed in perfect obedience to it, that God might not be dishonored in glorifying his people. For the accomplishing of this design also it was necessary that our High-priest should be

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holy,

(*f*) Psal. xl. 8.

holy, harmless and separate from sinners. Mr. I. passes this divine perfection in total silence; without offering any reason for it. The happiness of God likewise is essential to him; and therefore it is necessarily perfect and underived. The obedience and happiness of creatures cannot augment it. For this reason, what I said on that subject, however "quaint" it may appear to Mr. I. (g) can not but be absolutely true; because, if his felicity or satisfaction may be increased, he must of course be a finite being, seeing he is in measure dependent on his creatures. All the pleasure an infinitely holy God can possibly have in his creatures is this—his approbation of his image impressed *on them*, and the exercise of his grace *by them*. And this, in other words, is only his being pleased with his own work; as it leads the creature to obedience and subjection to his revealed will. The texts of scripture which I produced to prove my idea, Mr. I. seems to treat as unworthy of notice, by saying nothing about them. If Mr. I. considers the Bible as a consistent book, which it most certainly is, some care should be taken to understand it in that light; or else we may plead even
 scripture

scripture to our final disappointment. All the joy that is in heaven, over a repenting sinner, arises *entirely* from his being made a partaker of the grace of God according to eternal purpose; which is both the gift and work of Jehovah. And, our keeping his commandments, and doing that which is pleasing in his sight, is *alone* the effect of his working in us both to will and do of his good pleasure. Hence it is that God is said, to work in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Christ Jesus (*h*). If Mr. I. will shew me how the holiness of God's nature and law can consist with the pardon of sin without the vicarious obedience and death of Christ; and how the blessedness of God can be at all affected by any thing his creatures be, do, or suffer; I hereby promise due attention to it—because I feel an aversion to that dispute which is only about the sound of words.

Justice in God may be called holiness exemplified. The gospel doctrine maintained by Mr. I. does not appear friendly to this divine perfection; but the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, and *his* gospel shews us

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(*b*) Heb. xiii. 21.

how it is exalted in saving sinners. His law is holy, just and good; every transgression of it exposes the sinner to its penalty; and therefore while justice guards his throne, sin cannot pass unpunished; or the sinner be forgiven without satisfaction. God is the same amiable being when he inflicts punishment for sin, as when he pardons it; because no act of his will or his power can shade the beauty of his glorious character. What he necessarily hates, he necessarily wills to punish. He hates nothing but sin; and this must be infinitely odious in his sight; both as a violation of his law and an opposition to his nature—for this reason he necessarily wills to punish it, and cannot but do it. Hence follows the inevitable eternal punishment of those who are not interested in his forgiving grace by the atonement of Christ. Were not God to will the punishment of sin, it must be either because he loves it, or because he has not power to punish it, or because such punishment would be unjust. Neither of which can be true. All he has purposed concerning his creatures, all he hath said to them, and all he has done, or will eventually do, with them; is absolutely good and just—or good because just. For justice and goodness,

ness, in this instance, mean the same. This perfection he naturally loves; for it is essential to him. Nor can he dispense with its manifestation in the bestowment of his gracious gifts to sinners, without giving up, so far, the love of himself: this would be an imperfection, and therefore impossible. He is not unrighteous in taking vengeance; and he is just in forgiving sin. He is a just God, and yet a Savior. In a word, he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. The justice of God, as an offended Lawgiver, has been shewn in a multitude of instances; but never in such a striking point of light as in the cross of Christ. I call the sufferings of Christ the highest possible expression of the jealousy of God for the holiness of his nature and his law; or the most astonishing scene of unrighteous torture that could ever be endured. Let Mr. I. take that side of the subject which may be judged most worthy of God, and most consistent with his word. Though the justice of God renders it absolutely necessary for him to punish sin; yet, on proper considerations, it is not repugnant to justice to spare the sinner. Yea rather, if another suffer for him, it is an act of justice to acquit him; because, if
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the law be fulfilled, justice is glorified in dispensing pardon. Thou wast a God who forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance on their inventions (*i*). In my idea this matter is clearly and expressly settled for us in the following words. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus (*k*). This passage evidently shews us that the grand design of God in setting forth Christ was, to declare or demonstrate (*l*) his righteousness in forgiving the sins, and justifying the persons, of those who believe in Jesus. But, because this witness is so peremptory in his evidence, Mr. I. opposes, and intimates the text is "mistranslated (*m*).". Wherein does this appear? Why truly our translators have so strangely forgotten themselves as to render the greek adjective (*n*) *just* instead of *righteous*. A very capital blunder indeed! What evil

(*i*) Psal. xcix. 8. (*k*) Rom. iii. 24—6.

(*l*) Εἰς Ἐνδειξιν. (*m*) Gof. doc. p. 30. (*n*) Δίκαιος.

evil consequences may not ensue? And can Mr. I. prove that there is any essential difference between the justice and righteousness of the divine nature and conduct? If so, let it be done—If not, such an useless remark had better been avoided. We cheerfully agree with Mr. I. to resolve “the undertaking of Christ and its operation, into “the mercy, love and grace of God”—but was his undertaking ever designed to declare or demonstrate these perfections, as the text before us asserts respecting the righteousness of God? Nor is there any reason why it should—for, that God is gracious and merciful, seems no difficulty with mankind; the great question is, ‘Can God be just and yet forgive transgressors?’ Yes, he can; and this scripture declares that it is manifested in the propitiation of Jesus Christ; and experienced in the sinner’s bosom through faith in his blood. If Mr. I. can separate the idea of “punitive justice” from the propitiation of Christ; it will be kind to lay it before us. That “God is no respecter of persons,” and that “his conduct is equitable and righteous,” I freely grant—but can Mr. I. say “what method” that is which God hath taken to pardon and justify jew and gentile,
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for this is the meaning of the text in hand, besides setting forth Christ as the propitiation to declare his righteousness in bestowing these blessings? If he can, he ought in justice to the truth of God to do it—If not, his criticism will prove of no avail to him. Could sin have been forgiven, and the ungodly justified, without regard had to the holiness and justice of the Most High, the obedience and death of Christ must have been without a cause and without design; for, if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Truth is as much a divine perfection as the preceeding. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he. Truth is opposed to all error and falshood. As such it is an essential perfection in Deity. In his infinite will and understanding has eternally existed the whole idea, and all its parts, of magnifying his justice in the condemnation of some, and of glorifying his grace and justice in the salvation of other sinners. No possible variation from this original can occur, either as to persons or things. To deny this is to make Deity imperfect; and, by consequence, to deny his existence. For an imperfect

perfect eternal Being is a contradiction. The Bible is a transcript, or letters patent, of this great Original; and therefore perfectly corresponds with it. Hence our Lord says, *Thy word is truth* (o). The truth of God, in his righteous threatening against sin, has never been, nor ever will be, so fulfilled, as in the cross of Christ—Nor can it be said, strictly speaking, to be fulfilled, or fully endured, till the subject of it be gloriously delivered from all its effects. This we *now* behold exemplified in the person of Christ, and *shall* see it eternally realized in all the redeemed; but, in no others, while the Lord liveth.

The *love* of God also ought to be considered by us. Love must have an object. God necessarily loves himself, and all the works of his hands, as such; both because they are the productions of his will, and because they bear the impress of his glory. But he cannot love sin; because it is a defect, or a departure from rectitude, and, as such, not lovely; and because it is an opposition to his nature, and therefore infinitely hateful to him. To love sin in the

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(o) John, xvii. 17.

first sense, would argue an imperfection in God; and in the last, a contradiction. Here I would propose three things—1. Is it possible for the whole world to produce a *proof* of God's loving his own character in pardoning sin, if Christ did not suffer and die as the substitute for sinners?—2. Does it discover love to the Lord Jesus Christ to put his soul to grief and make him an offering for sin, if it could have been forgiven without his sufferings and death?—3. Could any other step in divine conduct have so gloriously attested God's love to his people, as appointing the Lord Jesus Christ to be their Redeemer? Let Mr. I. consider maturely, and answer explicitly. Love, as an essential perfection in Deity, must be immutable; the contrary would suppose a change in God, which is impossible. Its objects can neither be augmented or diminished; nor its designs rendered abortive—for, it is the love of God. Moreover,

Grace, as a divine perfection, is as eternal and unchangeable as his nature. This is a peculiar act or manifestation of love. Grace, in my idea of it here, is a determination of the divine will to glorify himself
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in a certain number of intelligent creatures, by raising them to a state of honor and happiness that exceeds the utmost experience of created excellence. A creature could no more deserve a state of glory superior to creation, than it could deserve existence before creation. For though there may be a greater remove in idea, and in fact, from non-existence to a state of being, than there is from one state of being to another; yet both are equally the result of the divine will and the effect of the divine arm: for no creature can change its state of being, any more than produce its first being. A state of creation I call simply the effect of his will; but all above that, or all that is added to it, I call the effect of his gracious will. And I judge of the extent of this gracious act of his will by the ultimatum of it; and to this the Savior refers when he says, Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me (*p*)—This idea of grace leads me to believe, that God's choice of his people *in Christ* is an eternal uncaused act of his will, that the glory they enjoy *with Christ* is

(p) John, xvii, 24.

the performance of that act of will; and that the whole is necessarily and eternally present to the divine mind. Besides, what is not deserved cannot be demanded as a debt; and what is not due may be withheld or bestowed as the donor chuses. Those who are not the objects of this favor have no just ground of complaint; because they are not injured of their right, and because their state is not affected by that of others. The objects of this gracious will are described by the text, *given to Christ* and finally *with him*. But more about grace hereafter.

Mercy, as a divine attribute, is as essential to God, and its exercise as eternal and immutable, as love or grace. Gracious is the Lord, and righteous: yea, our God is merciful. Mercy is grace continued to the same objects, though under a different consideration. Love respects those whom it chose in Christ to eternal glory; and mercy is grace continued to them notwithstanding the supervention of sin. Sin made a change in their moral circumstances, but not in their covenant relation. It is misery that renders a person an object of mercy; and therefore, apart from the introduction

tion of sin, mercy would have had no object; or there would have been no opportunity for its manifestation—but sin is not suffered to prevent their final felicity; because mercy appears in their behalf in appointing Christ, their covenant Head, to become their Redeemer in the fulness of time. Hence Paul observes that, God makes known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory. And again, notwithstanding their wretched apostacy and rebellion, he observes that God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, *even when we were dead in sins*, hath quickened us together with Christ (q).

Wisdom is a divine perfection too; and, like the rest already named, its exercise must be eternal and perfect. The gospel maintained by Mr. I. affords not a single ray of light by which to behold this glorious perfection; but the gospel of Christ displays it with meridian splendor. In forgiving sin, it is safe to say, that God could not discover one perfection and conceal another. Holiness, justice and truth are his
perfections,

(q) Rom. ix. 23. Eph. ii. 4, 5.

perfections, as really as mercy, love and grace—nor can any act of his will or his power be partial to either. Why? His wisdom forbids it. Wisdom is that perfection in God in the exercise of which he proposes an end altogether worthy of himself; and appoints such means as shall infallibly secure the end designed. The glory of the character of God is dearer to him, is more important in itself, and is more highly esteemed by those who know him best; than the complete felicity of the whole creation. It strikes me as a more sinful detraction from his dignity and greatness, to suppose him capable of shading one perfection to display another, than it is to deny his existence—because, though by so doing we allow him to exist, yet, we consider him, in that instance, as imperfect in being partial to himself—the idea of which is absurd, and the fact impossible. If his wisdom be not equal to a full display of himself in saving his people, we may freely conclude that it is not a perfection in his nature. Here let me ask a question—How could holiness, by which he necessarily hateth sin; and how could justice, by which he is necessarily bound in honor to his character

rather to punish it; I say, how could these harmonize with grace and mercy in pardoning sin and saving sinners? A question this which enters essentially into our present business; but, a question, which neither Mr. I. nor any who think with him, will be able to answer to all eternity—Dr. Young justly observes,

*They set at odds Heav'n's jarring attributes;
And, with one excellence, another wound;
Maim Heav'n's perfection, break its equal
beams,*

*Bid mercy triumph over—God himself,
Undeified by their opprobrious praise:
A God All mercy, is a God unjust.*

But the word of truth returns a reply so explicit to the question proposed, that one would imagine every man with a Bible in his hand must understand it; unless he chose to be ignorant. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings (r). God does nothing but what becomes him—and what becomes

(r) Heb. ii, 10.

becomes his infinite character wisdom directs. It was therefore necessary for wisdom to exhibit her power and beauty in making the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. If we consult the apostle concerning God's eternal purpose in Christ to glorify his church, he calls it, *The manifold wisdom of God* (s). When he speaks of the redemption and forgiveness of sins which the chosen have in the blood of Christ, according to the riches of his grace, he says therein God *abounded towards them in ALL wisdom and prudence* (t). And when he refers to the doctrine of Christ crucified, and to the blessings which God hath freely given his people in him, he scruples not to assert that it is, *The wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory* (u). This perfection of wisdom shews me that, though justice and judgement are the habitation of his throne, yet mercy and truth go before his face—
that

(s) Eph. iii. 10.

(t) Eph. i. 8.

(u) 1 Cor. ii. 7. I hope to be forgiven for using the word *mystery* in the presence of Mr. I. because I find it in one of my favorite authors. Paul was "a good, learned, honest, though persecuted man"—and therefore I as much respect him as Mr. I. does his favorite Emlyn.

that mercy and truth are met together ; and that righteousness and peace have kissed each other (v). In the mediation of Christ, from the intrinsic excellence of his person, obedience and cross, I see how all the perfections of Deity unite in saving the chosen of God, though in themselves the chief of sinners ; and that the whole plan takes its rise from the infinite, unfrustrable wisdom of God.

Though these perfections are here considered distinctly, and by creatures it is impossible it should be otherwise ; yet, in the divine nature, they are so together and at once, that they cannot be divided. As God is necessarily an eternal, unchangeable Being, so must all the acts of his will be likewise ; because a temporal, or new act of will, would argue imperfection and mutability ; which, with him, is absolutely impossible. Hence it may be inferred, that all the manifestations of himself in time, are only so many discoveries and confirmations of his eternal designs

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(v) Psal. lxxxv. 10—lxxxix. 14. A friend of mine, after reading Mr. I.'s gospel doctrine, made this remark, " This flaming performance is an attempt to prove neither more or less than this ; that is, that " mercy and peace *killed* righteousness and truth, instead of *kissing* them."

for his own glory. In this view, time and eternity correspond infallibly with each other. If we wish to think honorably of God, while we desire an interest in his forgiving grace; this sketch of the divine character will shew us the *necessity* of the satisfaction of Christ; as well for the defence of his holiness and justice, as for the display of his mercy and grace. As far as our ideas of revealed truth agree or disagree with the glorious perfections of God, so far they are right or wrong, and therefore to be approved or rejected; because God cannot reveal any thing in his word which is dishonorable to himself.

V. The preceeding part of these papers has been employed to prove the *truth* and the *necessity* of the satisfaction of Christ; the ensuing part is designed to shew that, nevertheless, the pardon of sin is an act of free grace. And here it may not be improper to consider some of the remarks made by Mr. I. on the subject.

“By free grace he means the *undeserved* favor of God (*w*).” In this we cordially agree; because the highest creature can do nothing

nothing to deserve his favor; and because, if deserved, it would not be conferred by free grace. The distinction between *desert* and *grace* is very necessary, and very obvious—may we never forget it. Grace, in this just view of it, totally excludes all preceeding, present, or subsequent qualifications and conditions in the subject of it for ever. But Mr. I. says that this undeserved favor of God is “offered to men by Jesus Christ.” This “term” is not only “unscriptural” but antiscritptural; and so is “the idea conveyed by it.” I read that God *gave* his people grace in Christ before the world began—that he *gives* them grace in time—and that eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord is the *gift* of God (*x*)—but I no where read of these blessings being *offered* to them. To *offer*, and to *give*, are so distinct, they ought never to be blended; because they cannot mean the same thing. What is *given*, is given not only with a view to being possessed, but secures the possession; but what is *offered* may, or may not, be possessed; just as it happens—And, is it then uncertain with God, whether men will, or will not, enjoy his GIFT

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(*x*) 2 Tim. i. 9. Rom. xv. 15—vi. 23.

of eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord?
Let Mr. I. answer freely for himself.

Mr. I. also speaks of God's "treating jews
"and gentiles on the same terms (y)." I
would only ask, Is a free gift to be purcha-
sed? If not, why talk of "*terms*?" Why
should such discordant language be used on
a plain subject? If terms must be introdu-
ced, I would observe, we both agree in say-
ing, that God pardons jew and gentile ac-
cording to his *free grace*. Again,

Mr. I. points out the returning penitent
as the subject of free forgiveness. Here al-
so we agree; for the true penitent is the on-
ly man in the world who is a partaker of
that grace which is connected with eternal
glory. But, the question is, *How* came he to
be forgiven? Did his former sins deserve
it? No. Does his present repentance de-
serve it? No. For this would be making
one free favor the cause of another; which
would be absurd, and therefore cannot be
admitted. If we look at repentance in the
glass of the law, we see it accompanied with
a conviction of deserved punishment, but
leaves

leaves the sinner in despair. If we examine it in the light of the gospel, we find it flowing from the same munificent hand and compassionate heart with pardon itself (z); and consequently forgiveness cannot be the effect of repentance. Moreover, according to Mr. I. repentance is not the reason why the penitent is pardoned, because he says forgiveness is of free grace. If there be therefore any deservedness in the penitent, as a penitent, or in any other view, his pardon is not of free grace; because free grace means the *undeserved* favor of God. But, to put this matter out of doubt, let it be observed, that the children of God were blessed with ALL spiritual blessings in Christ, repentance and pardon among the rest, according as they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world (a). This being the case, repentance is as antient and free a blessing as forgiveness of sin, and designed for the same persons; and, both being eternal in the will of God, the one cannot be the cause or condition of the other: because nothing out of God can be the reason of the volitions of his will; and because the effect cannot exist prior to its cause. For *of* him, and *through* him,

(z) Acts, v. 31.

(a) Eph. i. 3, 4.

him, and *to* him are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen (*b*).

Mr. I. seems very willing to bring down the Most High to a human standard—at least his doctrine amounts to that idea. Man is to forgive the offences of his fellow-creatures without a recompence; and therefore the infinite Lawgiver of heaven and earth is to forgive his rebellious creatures without a recompence to his law, or else his forgiving them is not an act of free grace. This, I think, is the chief design of that gospel doctrine which Mr. I. wishes to maintain. But, is this an honest statement of the subject? Or acting the part of a fair disputant? For, in order to have come to his conclusion with honor, should not Mr. I. have produced evidence to prove that the laws violated and the objects offended, in each case, were precisely and universally parallel? Then he would have reasoned like a man—but now he only begs the question, and supposes what he ought to have established. Every one sees that there is a material difference between offending a fellow-subject in a state, and insulting the person of majesty in that state—
but

(*b*) Rom. xi. 36.

but there is an infinitely greater difference still between an act of treason against the highest earthly prince, and an act of sin against the great immortal God. And, therefore, while this difference remains, the idea of Mr. I. must be dishonorable to God and dangerous to his own soul. Let him well consider what is said above on the law of God, the evil of sin, and the glory of the divine character. Besides, there is a difference between offences committed against fellow-subjects, which seems to have been forgotten. Were a man to rob him of his property and endanger his life, or either of these; though he might *freely* forgive the man in his heart, yet I suppose he would not hinder the law from demanding the recompence in that case provided—Or, if he did, he would not be deemed a friend to the laws of his country. Upon the whole therefore I conclude, that there can be no just argument formed from creatures, or from christians, offending and forgiving each other, to our sinning against God and his forgiving us; and, for this reason, I would wish Mr. I. the next time he publishes on this subject, not to confound things which differ, nor to aim at drawing conclusions till he has tried and proved his premises;

premises; lest reproof should fall on him as well as the Gentleman he attempts to defend.

With the author of Thoughts, Mr. I. apprehends that, if satisfaction be given to the law of God, then forgiveness is "a *debt* (c)," and not an act of free grace. To the Lord Jesus Christ it is a debt; or, in other words, he has a just and legal claim on the divine Lawgiver for the life of all his people, because he has magnified the law, in all its requirements, in their nature and stead. Having borne the curse of the law for them they are exempted, or acquitted, from bearing it themselves, as an act of justice to him; or, as a debt due to him from the righteous Legislator. It would be unjust to inflict the curse on the surety and the sinner too. He has, properly speaking, merited their pardon, or acquittal from punishment; by sustaining in his own person the punishment due to their transgressions. Hence God is said to be *just* in forgiving the sins of his people—and, for a corresponding reason, Christ is called the *Author*, or meritorious cause, of salvation to all that obey him (d). Yes, and by his own blood, he hath *obtained* for them eternal

(c) Gof. doc. p. 12. (d) 1 John, i. 9. Heb. v. 9.

eternal redemption—that redemption which plainly includes, if not chiefly intends, the forgiveness of all their sins. However, I do not call it a debt *to us*—for, though satisfaction was made *for us*, yet not *by us*. The Lord Jesus Christ being the procuring cause of our pardon, *to us it is a free gift*. We have neither done, nor can do, any thing to deserve it. To us it is, to all intents and purposes, a gift of undeserved favor from a just and gracious God.

Yet, still it may be a difficulty with Mr. I. *how* the forgiveness of sin can be of grace, if it was obtained by the satisfaction of Christ—for the purpose of removing the difficulty therefore I would wish him to consider a “stale” but good rule of sound reason—namely, ‘The cause of a cause, is the cause of that which is caused.’ For instance, the death of Christ is the deserving, or meritorious cause of our forgiveness, but the eternal good will, or grace of God is the cause of his being so; because the Savior himself is the gift of grace to his church. God *so* loved the world, as to *give* his only begotten Son—God loved us, and *sent* his Son to be the *propitiation* for
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our sins (e). We being, as sinners, bound to endure the penalty of the law, it was grace appointed a Surety who was equal to the important design; and hence God in Christ, or for his sake, hath freely forgiven us. And elsewhere, having a clear view of the harmony of grace, and the cross of Christ, the apostle boldly asserts, I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (f). By which words we are evidently taught that the vicarious death of Christ, is so far from opposing, that it illustrates the grace of God to his people. It was eternal grace and wisdom that provided the person of Christ as a sacrifice for sin; and it was the same wisdom and grace which determined his death to be the procuring cause of forgiveness, because of his personal excellence and suitability. Though the end to be answered by the atonement of Christ originated in sovereign grace, yet his fitness for answering that end consisted in his personal purity and glory. The glorious Jehovah was under no more obligation to appoint a satisfaction to his law for us

(e) John, iii. 16.

1 John, iv. 10.

(f) Eph. iv. 32.

Gal. ii. 21.

us than for angels ; and therefore his doing so must be an act of undeserved favor. And this will appear if we consider three things —1. If grace be a divine perfection, it must be essential to Deity ; and, as such, be necessarily uncaused, both in itself and in its exercises.—2. The human nature of Christ, though formed perfectly free from sin, was not the cause of God's will to glorify himself in the final felicity of his church. It was free favor that resolved to bring that part of human nature into an ineffable union with the Son of God, thereby to constitute the person of our Redeemer ; and to advance Head and members together to a state of ultimate glory in the highest heavens for ever. And the exercise of this grace, both towards Christ as Man, and towards us in him, manifestly springs from the sovereign will of God alone ; because free grace is undeserved favor. Though our Immanuel has obtained for his people a *right* to pardon and glory, yet he did not purchase the grace of pardon nor the glory that follows. That dwelt in the heart of God from eternity to them, and this was from everlasting provided for them ; and therefore neither could be purchased.—3.

A little attention to the subjects of forgiveness will also shew us that it must be, *to them*, an act of grace. God bestows no favor *in* time, but he designed it *before* time. And as the creature, who is the object of this act of the divine will, did not deserve that act of will to be passed in his favor; so, of consequence, he could not deserve the favor to which he was appointed by that act, and which he possesses pursuant to it. The bestowment of the favor has no cause but the eternal will of God; and therefore the whole is of grace, from first to last. For this reason neither moral virtues, nor spiritual graces, can be the cause or condition of our salvation. If this reasoning be *denied*, we must deny that there is such a thing as free favor at all; and we must grant that the acts of the divine will were the effects of some cause that is superior and prior to himself. If we *allow* it, then that gospel which Mr. I. maintains must be given up; because both sides of a contradiction cannot be true.

This grace of God appears to me to be manifested in a distinguishing way—for, I conclude that *all* are not redeemed, because *all* are not pardoned and saved. In proof
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of this idea I produced Rev. v. 9. where the redeemed sing this song of praise to the Lamb—Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. *What* were they redeemed from? The desert of sin; or the penalty of a broken law. By what *price*? The blood of Christ. *To whom* was this price paid? The offended Lawgiver. *From* the demands of his insulted Majesty therefore they were redeemed, that they might be brought to the enjoyment of his pardoning smiles. Hence Christ is said to suffer the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. The resurrection, exaltation and glorification of Christ's human nature, and all his people in and with him, as their Surety and Forerunner, was the joy that was set before him, for which he endured the cross, and despised the shame—All which is perfectly secured, to each of the redeemed, by his being sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For this reason Paul avers, that he who was delivered and suffered for our offences, rose again for our justification (g). Separate this idea from the cross and resurrection

(g) Heb. xii. 2. Rom. iv. 25.

resurrection of Christ, and the whole must be universally and eternally without a meaning. The remarks of Mr. I. on this part of the subject, I confess, I did not expect. My sense of Rev. v. 9. it seems, is "new"—but, wherein is not mentioned. Should not this novelty have been specified, if my information and conviction had been desired? I think my view of the text has been constantly receiving confirmation ever since the death of Abel and of Cain—and, if so, it cannot now be very new. Not this only, but it is "hardly reconcileable to some texts of scripture (h)." Christ is said to die for all—to give himself a ransom for all—to taste death for every man—to seek and save that which was lost. I own this is the language of scripture, and I rejoice in its truth; but, does Mr. I. believe the doctrine it teaches? If not, why quote the words? And, if believed, why opposed? for Mr. I. denies that Christ died "as a substitute for sinners," and these passages, without that idea, have no meaning. Would Mr. I. quote scripture by *sound* alone, without regarding its *sense*? Let us hope not. That I may not enter on another subject,

to

to which these texts would fairly lead me, let it suffice to observe, The justice of God was satisfied with the obedience and death of Christ, or it was not—The wisdom of God appointed the persons for whom Christ obeyed and died, and to whom he is righteousness and redemption, or it did not. Let Mr. I. answer without reserve. Perhaps, it will be said, The reply is given already—for Mr. I. observes, “If all are not finally happy, Christ gives us the reason, Ye *will* not come to me that he might have life.” To which I subjoin this remark. Coming to Christ is *not* “the reason” of being redeemed and saved—nor is the contrary the reason of *not* being redeemed and saved. Redemption and “final happiness” proceed *not* according to the will of man but according to the will of God. It is *not* of him who willeth, nor of him who runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy (i). Coming to Christ, in a gospel sense, is receiving and relying on him, by faith, for compleat salvation, in opposition to every other object of trust; and the end of that faith is everlasting glory. But, do all men believe to salvation? If Mr. I. will

(i) Rom. ix. 16.

will kindly tell us why any do so, the rest will be easily understood. Hitherto I have complied with Mr. I.'s request, and "kept the subject in debate clear of others (*k*)"—nor do I think I shall depart from it in asserting that,

The Holy Spirit and his operations cannot properly be separated from our subject. Respecting this divine Person and his work I observe total silence reigns in the gospel doctrine maintained by Mr. I. and, indeed, in the works of most who deny the satisfaction of Christ; except he be sometimes named to be despised. But, Mr. I. would do well to remember, that nothing is *deservedly* called the gospel of Christ, from which the glory of his person and his gracious agency stand excluded; for, we should never have known the pardon of sin, even as a doctrine, had not the Holy Spirit revealed it in the sacred page; nor do we ever know it, as a truth in experience, till applied to the conscience by his effectual power. This also shews that the forgiveness of sin is, *to us*, a gift of free grace. The condescending

(*k*) Gof. doc. p. 28. At most I have only followed whither Mr. I. led me.

ing and gracious part the Spirit of truth performs, in the plan of salvation, is expressed in few words by Christ himself—He will reprove the world of sin—He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you (*l*). Though Mr. I. has thought proper entirely to overlook what I said on this passage; yet it is essentially necessary to the very being of a christian. It is not to be confined to the apostles, or apostolic age—for that man in whom the Spirit of life and holiness has not begun to dwell, is not as yet, in a gospel sense, a real christian—what he may be in future I know not. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (*m*). I am very far from thinking lightly of acquired abilities, or of a religious education; but I am as fully satisfied as I am of the shining sun, that these, with all their possible advantages, will never lead a sinner to Christ for pardon and peace—and yet, without this, there is no admission to the kingdom of glory. For he declares himself that, no man comes unto the Father but by him (*n*). When the sinner is turned from darkness to light by the spirit of God, the

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holiness

(*l*) John, xvi. 8—14.(*m*) Rom. viii. 9.(*n*) John, xiv. 6.

holiness of God's nature and law, the desert and the evil of sin, with the utter impossibility of self-salvation, are discerned in so forcible a light that no promises, or vows, or excuses can evade; that no arguments, however plausible, can resist; the power of conviction. Hence Paul says, I was alive without the law once: but, when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful (o). It is in this situation of mind that the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ; by pointing out the glory of his person and the gracious design of his work, and by leading the sinner to look *alone* to him for pardon, righteousness and life. In this view Christ is precious to every one that believeth. It is not the work of the Spirit to put a new sense *on* scripture, but to shew the mind a new sense *in* scripture. And to this truth all the children of God bear witness in all generations. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit therefore they *receive* the atonement, not as offered *to* them, but as made *for*

(o) Rom. vii. 9—13.

for them; and rely upon it for the forgiveness of all their iniquities. Nor does any sinner look up to God, with approving delight in his holiness and justice, till he sees the beauty of these perfections, in harmony with grace and mercy, displayed in the obedience and death of Christ. Nor shall I chuse to give up the proper Deity and satisfaction of Christ, till I am made willing to suffer eternal misery. And I speak thus freely on the subject, because of the clear conviction and full persuasion I have in my own mind of the truth and importance of these doctrines for my salvation.

Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.

But if Immanuel's face appear,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His grace removes my sins.

While jews on their own law rely,
And greeks of wisdom boast;
I love th' incarnate Mystery,
And there I fix my trust. WATTS.

In a word, as the Holy Spirit is a Spirit of Truth, so his teachings are never inconsistent. He never leads one man to cast his all on Christ for life and salvation, and another to make light of him, much less to deny him; either in the glory of his person, or in the gracious design of his coming into the world. And, blessed be God, the whole is a doctrine according to godliness—for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them (*p*). Then, and only then, are these good works duly regarded, when the man is animated by the gracious energy of the Holy Spirit, and constrained by the love of Christ. Thus actuated, he lives henceforth, not to himself, but to him who died for him and rose again. And here I would beg leave to remark one thing; which is—That “the *mode* in which God is pleased, in infinite wisdom, to bestow his free grace, through Jesus Christ (*q*);” is as truly revealed in the scriptures now, as it will be in heaven hereafter; and that those who live and die strangers in experience to the one are not likely to enjoy the other. Search the scriptures, says our Lord, for in them

(*p*) Eph. ii. 10.

(*q*) Gos. doc. p. 36.

them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which *testify* of me (*r*). The satisfaction of Christ clearly understood, shews us the dignity and grace of the divine character in glorifying his church—and his character appears in such a beautiful point of light to the redeemed, that heaven will not be too exalted in praise, nor eternity too long in duration, to glorify the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for such a display of wisdom, love and power, to such unworthy creatures. If ever Mr. I. or the present writer, be conducted thither, our song will be, Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins *in his own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (*s*).

Here I might have closed—but there seems a sort of propriety in making some general remarks, rather like *self-defence*, before I do so. I hope the reader will excuse it.

Mr. I. supposes that I am “anxious” to know the author of Thoughts (*t*)—but, I have not the smallest acknowledgement to give for the

(*r*) John, v. 39. (*s*) Rev. i. 5, 6. (*t*) Gof. doc. p. 7.

the information. Things are of more consequence with me than persons. It appears to be one whom Mr. I. most tenderly regards, by his earnest defence of him and his work; and there I leave it. The most and worst I said of him was, if he have truth on his side he need not be afraid or ashamed of his name. However, if "humility and candor" were his motives, let him remain concealed still. If I "forgot the language of the gentleman" to him, accept my apology—When gentlemen travel incog, they must not be surprised, and they should not be offended, if, sometimes, they come short of the respect that is shewn when known. The remedy is with themselves. Had I treated this author with "contempt," with a "censorious and abusive" spirit; Mr. I. could have produced some proof of it—but, as that is not attempted; I must plead, *Not guilty*. Most courts of justice look further for evidence than mere assertion; and, the present instance, demands it.

If I "discovered a want of candor," the truth of my uncandid words is not disputed, nor even denied; let me hope therefore to be forgiven. It is pity that truth should be deemed

ed uncharitable. I am told, indeed, that some of these expressions are "the cant of a party," and that, in general, they contain charges "of an awful import;" but, as Mr. I. has not chosen to explain himself, I shall pass it. Charity for *errors* I have none; for *persons* I would not be exceeded. Let persons be as blind as they may to the truths of God, I know their hearts may be changed by his invincible grace; but error remains the same for ever. The apostle says, If any man, or even an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which he preached, let him be accursed (*u*). Did my want of candor exceed his? To some of old our Lord said, Ye hypocrites, ye blind guides, ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell (*v*)? Did not HE discover a want of candor too? What were these men, that Christ thus addressed them? In their own, and in the opinion of the populace, they were the most pious and devout of all the nation. Wherein then consisted their guilt? In rejecting the person and atonement of the Son of God; and, in opposing the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Let a man treat the truths of God as he may,
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(*u*) Gal. i. 8, 9.

(*v*) Matt. xxiii. 25. 33.

the candor of the present day will, nevertheless, give him a place in the presence of God. Not so the charity of the scriptures; for that rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth—that does nothing against the truth, but for the truth (*w*). I must look higher than human “fincerity” for an evidence of truth; because a man may be as sincere in the wrong as in the right. Nor dare I call that “christian love” which opposes the truth of Christ. I am not sensible of any nobler expression of christian love than attempting to lead the mistaken into the knowledge of the truth, and pointing out the danger of error—This has been one motive of my writing the preceeding observations. Though Mr. I. perhaps, may think them “unworthy of notice (*x*)”—Such a remark, I confess, would do very well, if no better could be made; but, if a better could be devised, this would be superfluous.

According to Mr. I, it is my infelicity to be “blinded by regard to human systems.” If by system be meant a connected order of ideas in divinity, as well as natural science; then I profess myself a lover of system—because

(*w*) 1 Cor. xiii. 6. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. (*x*) Gof. doc. p. 35.

cause the Bible contains the finest system possible. Truth altogether worthy of God, who is truth itself. But if Mr. I. or any one for him, will prove that the religious sentiments which I espouse, are a "human" system; I will very freely renounce them. Possibly the term system, with Mr. I. may stand for creed—It is true, to be consistent with himself, he ought to have no creed, because he has no object of faith; and, he can have no object of faith, because he cannot comprehend any doctrine of divine revelation—but, has Mr. I. no creed? Why then is mine opposed, and his friend's defended? However, I think it pretty manifest that those who most loudly exclaim against systems and creeds, do it, not because they have none of their own, but because they cannot rule the rest of mankind. The author of Thoughts says, "If God hath received a recompence for the sins of men, then grace is no more grace." To confute which assertion I named Eph. i. 7. where we are said, in Christ, to have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. And I was "serious" in what I did—that is, I designed the words of the apostle to prove the fallacy of the asser-

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tion to which I opposed them. But this, Mr. I. suggests, is using "art to defend my system (y);" because the term Satisfaction is not found in the text. If there be any art in this remark it is more than I am yet apprised of; and therefore must wait to be better taught. When Mr. I. gave his sense of the words, why was redemption omitted? Why was it said, the text speaks of forgiveness and not of satisfaction? Can forgiveness be enjoyed without redemption in the blood of Christ? And can redemption in the blood of Christ be obtained without satisfaction?

The author of Thoughts, if I understand him, sets free grace and the satisfaction of Christ, in direct opposition; and then says, He who robs him of free grace steals away his comfort. In consequence of which I said, that he who preaches the atonement of Christ steals away his comfort; and I thought this was both his doctrine and meaning. For which Mr. I. charges me with *almost* a "designed misrepresentation (z)." But if it even borders on misrepresentation, it is more than I know; and I am sure more than I designed—and therefore can own no fault till I see it.

(y) Ibid, p. 22.

(z) Ibid, p. 9.

it. I am fully persuaded that truth can stand alone; and I am equally conscious that I never designed to support it by any foreign aid: however, if it should appear that I have been mistaken, conviction shall soon produce confession. When I was speaking of the pardon of sin, I did not refer to God's having "engaged," or his being "obliged" to forgive any sinner, or any thing like it—My only idea was this; *How* God can forgive sin, seeing it exposes the sinner to the penalty of the law—Pursuant to this thought I said, If *one* sin may be forgiven without regard had to the divine *law*, the rights of the divine *government*, and the purity of the divine *nature*; so may *all* without exception. But Mr. I. in taking notice of this passage (*a*), kindly omits the terms Law, Government and Nature, as of no consequence; though their testimony *alone* concerned the argument in hand; and, though, without them, his quotation has no meaning—Yet, Mr. I. is so far from misrepresentation, that I must not reprove his conduct, nor suspect his design. It is pity to censure integrity.

I said, in my second remark, that Christ, in the capacity of Mediator, gave satisfacti-

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(*a*) Ibid, p. 17.

on to himself as God, because he satisfied that justice which is essential to the divine nature; in which nature, as a divine person, he exists as well as the Father and Holy Spirit. But by the account of Mr. I. my expressions are "so obscure that I had need explain myself (*b*)."

And yet, it is directly added, "that most impartial judges will acknowledge that it contains no answer as intended." Now, if it be plain enough for most impartial judges to form an opinion, I think I may be excused from further explanation; and shall therefore leave it. Withal observing, I should be obliged to any of those impartial judges to say *why* it does not contain the answer intended; that I might see the defect and amend it. As to the citation from Emlyn, it might have been spared—for no person, that I know of, supposes that Deity suffered, or that the human nature of Christ is infinite and deified; and therefore Emlyn only did, what others have done, first make monstrous suppositions, and then destroy the work of his own hands. And further, "from my position," it seems, "consequences of a very serious nature may be drawn (*c*)"—but Mr. I. out
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(*b*) Ibid, p. 23, 4.

(*c*) Ibid, p. 28.

of kindness to me, "forbears" to say what they are. I must not doubt his capacity; and therefore I own his friendship. If any one will lend me Foster and Emlyn, which Mr. I. recommends to my attention, I hope to read them; for they must be bad performances indeed from which nothing can be learned.

In treating this subject I have had regard to the divine law and the desert of sin—have mentioned redemption as obtained by the satisfaction of Christ, and the necessity of its being so—nevertheless, I have observed that pardon, *to us*, is an undeserved favor—and, withal, have said that the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to our knowledge of this interesting truth, both as a doctrine revealed and a blessing imparted. Nor is the delightful subject yet exhausted, if Mr. I. should chuse to pursue it. If my ideas be according to truth, they cannot be received with too much affection; or regarded with too much firmness. A candid indifference, is a criminal opposition; for, our Lord says, He that is not *with* me is *against* me: and he that *gathereth* not with me *scattereth* abroad.

broad (d). On the other hand, if they are not "grounded on the *general* sense of scripture (e)," they may be easily refuted, both by the word of God and christian experience. I am not fond of controversy for its own sake; and therefore if Mr. I. should condescend to notice these papers, or any one for him, I have only to wish an attention to the several parts of the subject in their places, and then to quote fairly and answer explicitly; because, by so doing, the debate will be the better understood, and the sooner closed.

May the Holy Spirit guide the reader into all truth. Amen.

(d) Matt. xii. 30.

(e) Gof. doc. p. 35.

THE END.

